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AGENDA:

URBAN ISSUES

A newsletter from Massachusetts Attorney General Scott Harshbarger

Boston Streetworkers Work with City Youth

According to Attorney General Janet Reno, youth violence is "the greatest single crime problem in America today." Seventeen percent of all violent crime arrests in 1991 (the last year available for statistics) were committed by 10 to 17 year-olds.

Boston has responded to these rising levels of violence. In 1990 Former Boston Mayor, Raymond Flynn launched a new youth initiative in response to violence. He commissioned Boston Community Centers (BCC) to design a program specifically to address youth violence and related issues. The result came in the form of the Streetworker Program, a non-traditional, grass-roots approach to gang violence.

Streetworkers aim to rejuvenate community involvement working with "the worst of the worst" gang members. Utilizing BCC's 38 facilities throughout the city, Streetworkers help youth with family issues including substance abuse, adult education, and employment by connecting them with services ranging from infant to elderly programs.

The Streetworkers' focus addresses the needs of youth, established agencies and programs, and the community as a whole.

Through working closely with the Community Disorders and Anti Gang Violence units of the Boston Police Department, the Streetworkers protect "salvageable" kids from retaliation and the possibility of future conviction. Police trust the Streetworkers to get involved and bridge gaps between youth and police. Utilizing the legal system to work for and with youth breaks down the "youth vs. police" mentality which often exists on the streets. Officers are trained weekly by Streetworkers as part of their "community policing" program. This training program heightens the officers understanding of youth issues, teaches them how to reach gang members, and helps them better utilize Streetworkers. The police, in turn, support the Streetworkers with additional presence in dangerous neighborhoods. This collaboration leads to a more trustworthy and understanding view of the police as well as a less volatile atmosphere on the streets.

In December 1992, Boston Public Schools in collaboration with Boston Community Centers placed eight school based Streetworker team members of male-female pairs in four "target" high schools around the city. These specialized Streetworkers primary aim is to counsel troubled youths. They diffuse negative energy

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I. URBAN ISSUES FOCUS

By making urban issues one of his four central office-wide priorities, Attorney General Harshbarger has chosen to focus his office's limited resources, whenever possible, to cases which will have an impact on urban areas. In the past year and a half several cases have been brought against those who took advantage of residents in low-income neighborhoods. The following are examples of some of those cases brought by the AG's office.

\$40 MILLION FOR HOUSING MADE AVAILABLE

Beginning in the summer of 1991, an unusual sequence of events took place across cities and towns in Massachusetts. Income poor, inner city and suburban home owners were targeted to enter high interest rate mortgage loan transactions involving home improvements. Many home owners, who had considerable equity in their homes, were persuaded to enter into unconscionable loan settlements. The lenders were more interested

in the equity these home owners had built up, than in the ability of the consumers to repay their loans based on their monthly income.

In several cases, when the consumers could no longer repay these second mortgages, lenders foreclosed on the homes and entire families were evicted.

After learning about the home improvement mortgage scams, the Office of the Attorney General began investigating and prosecuting unscrupulous lenders, brokers and contractors. In July, 1991, a Home Improvement Mortgage Task Force was formed by drawing upon the resources of numerous divisions within the AG's office. The Task Force issued dozens of subpoenas, interviewed hundreds of consumers and sought the advice of various banking and lending industry experts to prosecute those who engaged in schemes aimed at stealing the homes of consumers.

The Task Force has initiated thirteen actions relating to home improvement and mortgage scams in the past year, including actions against several banks, mortgage companies, home improvement companies, individual home improvement salesmen and mortgage company executives.

Settlements were reached with banks in the Boston area including BayBank, Shawmut, Fleet, Quincy, South Shore, and USTrust. As a result of these settlements over \$40 million in restitution, low interest loans and low income housing will be made available to benefit those who have been victimized.

The remaining actions involved mortgage companies, home improvement companies, individual home improvement salesmen and mortgage company executives. Those actions continue to be litigated.

To obtain a copy of the HIMS report from the Attorney General's office, please contact George Weber at 617-727-2200.

LOW-INCOME CONSUMERS RECEIVE ADDITIONAL TELEPHONE SERVICE

In early September a settlement was agreed upon between New England Telephone and the Office of the Attorney General. The settlement provides more affordable basic telephone service to low income consumers in the Commonwealth.

According to an analysis of census data, a quarter of the homes in Massachusetts of people with incomes under \$10,000 have no phone. Yet, customers in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan, which are predominantly lower-income communities, subscribe to optional custom calling services at a proportion that is double to triple the statewide average for those services. As part of the agreement with the Attorney General, NET will modify its practices regarding the sale of such optional services to low income customers, and will expand its efforts to inform low-income customers about the availability of Lifeline and Link-Up discount programs offered by NET.

Under federally-established Lifeline and Link-Up programs, qualifying low-income consumers can receive a 50% discount on installation charges, a year to pay off the balance and a \$7 per month discount from monthly rates.

THE ENVIRONMENT

The environment is an essential part of any plan to revitalize our cities. The quality of urban life demands that we value the environmental resources

of our cities as much as those in the countryside or on our ocean or lake shores.

The Environmental Protection Division of the Attorney General's office and the Massachusetts Environmental Strike Force have undertaken the following legal actions and initiatives involving urban environmental crimes in order to ensure environmental equity:

- Criminal convictions for illegal dumping in Worcester and Fall River resulting in the incarceration of one defendant, who was also ordered to pay cleanup costs; another defendant had to pay nearly \$22,000 in fines and cleanup costs.

- A \$109 million settlement between the Commonwealth, the federal government and several private companies to clean up the pollution they caused in New Bedford Harbor

- A lawsuit against Conrail for allegedly violating state environmental protection laws by unnecessarily idling its trains at urban yards throughout the state. A Superior Court judge issued a preliminary injunction preventing Conrail from continuing the practice in warm weather until the pending suit is resolved

All of these actions send the clear message that protection of the urban environment will be vigorously pursued by the AG's office.

LEAD PAINT POISONING

Lead paint poisoning is estimated to be a health hazard for as many as half of the children under six in poor-inner city neighborhoods, where much of the housing is both old and deteriorated.

Youth Talk to AG About Violence

...in Lawrence

On September 17th Attorney General Harshbarger travelled to Lawrence to award a forfeiture grant to the Lawrence Adolescent Violence Prevention Project.

The Attorney General began his visit at the Merrimack Courts Family Development Office where he met with youth from the Drug Abuse Prevention Office (DAPO). He also met with District Attorney Kevin Burke and local officials, DAPO Director Robin Monroe, and the Program Director Jane Doherty.

The Attorney General took a walking tour around the development and the surrounding neighborhood. While walking Harshbarger spoke to the kids about street violence and problems young people have in today's society. He asked the group how many had seen acts of violence, like a fight, stabbing or shooting. He also probed into whether drugs, gangs, or weapons were in the schools, and who is in possession of them. When the AG asked why kids brought guns to school one of the kids replied, "Because they think they're fresh."

At the end of the tour the AG presented Lawrence Adolescent Violence Prevention Director Anna Rodriguez with the \$2,000 check for the Lawrence Adolescent Violence Prevention Project.

...in Brockton

Attorney General Harshbarger met with eleven Brockton High School students in November at the Brockton Fights Back Partnership headquarters. Most of the students involved in the discussion were members of the Brockton High Peer Leadership, Teen Council, Protect Teen Health, and the Governor's Alliance Against Drugs Peer Council. The AG was in Brockton to present the \$2,000 grant and listen to students' views on possible solutions to crime, violence, and drugs.

Posing questions to the students, Harshbarger gained knowledge about their views on guns, violence, and drugs at Brockton High School. One fifteen year old sophomore said, "Last week we had a kid slash another kid's face with a razor blade in front of hundreds of people. That's a problem."

The AG told students that 90% of the students do not bring guns, drugs, or knives to school, but that the other 10% must be dealt with to ease the conflict in schools. He praised the students involved in the many organizations at Brockton High for their efforts in keeping peace.

The Brockton Fights Back Partnership is a community coalition developed to reduce the use of alcohol and other drugs and prevent substance abuse by addressing the conditions which contribute to these problems.

Steven Smith, Brockton Fights Back Executive Director thanked the AG's office for the forfeiture money, which was generated by the sale of assets seized from drug dealers.

Youth Groups Learn from Attorney General's Staff

FRAMINGHAM HIGH SCHOOL

Neil Tassel, an Assistant Attorney General from the Appellate Division of the Criminal Bureau visited Framingham High School to discuss the AG's office.

Neil talked to the students about job opportunities in the AG's office. He also talked about consumer protection services available through the Office of the Attorney General.

He distributed "Cite-Your-Rights" Cards to the students. The Cards contained information on the following topics:

- Security Deposits
- Check Cashing
- Disclosure of Facts
- Store Return Policy
- Used Car Lemons
- New Car Lemons
- Auto Repair
- Goods Out-of-Stock
- 3 Day Cancellation
- Credit & Cancellation
- Defective Goods

The visit was organized by the Framingham High School guidance counselor.

LAWRENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY VISITS AG'S OFFICE

Jane Doherty, the Program Director of the Lawrence Housing Authority, asked the AG's office to participate in a Career Enrichment Day for the housing unit youth on December 8, 1993.

Christina Cardona, the AG's Minority Recruitment Officer, met with twelve middle and high school students from the Housing Project. They were told of the different employment opportunities available upon completion of their high school and college degrees. They also toured the Narcotics Division of the AG's office where state police officers talked to them about the dangers of drugs and crime. Trooper Jamie Cepero spoke about the advantages and opportunities of being bilingual in today's job market.

Earlier in the day the group visited the State House and met with representatives and senators. Many of the students were interested in careers in government and law enforcement, especially the State Police. The visit allowed the children to learn about some of the many possible career paths available to them in public service.

JAMAICA PLAIN STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT CONSUMER SCAMS

David Praik, a paralegal from the Consumer Protection Division, spoke to a group of sixty youngsters from Jamaica Plain about consumer fraud issues in June of 1993.

David spoke about telemarketing fraud, landlord/tenant issues, and giveaway schemes. The students asked many questions regarding their rights as consumers.

At the end of the presentation he gave the kids a quiz on what they learned. Many passed with flying colors and thanked him for the useful information they learned during the course of his visit.

The visit was organized by Action for Better Community Development (ABCD).

"Students Speak Out"

The following are comments made by students who have participated in the Student Conflict Resolution Expert (SCORE) program. They are real accounts of how students feel the SCORE program has helped change their life.

Clint: The training taught me how to deal with people, how to cope. This is something I wouldn't have learned anywhere else. I got to meet students I never would have met otherwise.

Irvell: We learned more here than we would in two weeks of classes. We didn't feel like we had a teacher behind us all the time, no one judging us. There was no racism among us, so I think we can help others fight racism in this school.

Widy: I learned that there are two sides. Now when my friends have trouble with other kids, instead of telling them to fight back, I'm thinking about how the other person is feeling. I know he has a "story" too.

Chris: I find that now I'm always thinking about how people are feeling - even when I don't want to - I can't ignore it.

Gabe: This was good because different races got along - the whole school should do it.

I learned how to deal with people and not to give my opinion about what they should do.

We learned to work as teammates, make decisions together.

Carolyn: It really makes me see there are two sides. I can't be so opinionated.

Max: I learned a lot about different people. It's good to help my school stop fighting.

Gabe and I stopped a fight the other day. Two girls were fighting and we went up to them and talked to each of them alone. We told them they should go to mediation.

Kristin: It has changed me - I'm more reasonable. I think things will be less difficult at home - knowing there are two sides.

Dannie: I learned patience and how to keep my opinion to myself. Also, I'm more able to get up and speak in front of people.

Teya: You brought reality into the training - about what's really going on out there. I felt useless before about all the violence; now I feel that being neutral can help. (Five of Teya's friends were killed this year)

We hope to continue the "Students speak out" feature in every issue of the AG's newsletter. If you have youngsters who would like to voice their opinions and/or concerns in the AG's newsletter please contact the editor, Ms. Erin O'Sullivan, at 617-727-2200. The next issue of the newsletter will be issued in May.

Boston Voices

On Monday, October 18th, Boston Foundation Youth Fellows, Caroline Dorcena and Deborah Ruiz, opened a National Conference of Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families by facilitating a dialogue with five Boston-area young people. The following are excerpts reprinted from their REPORT, a newsletter printed by the organization. These are the words and ideas of our community's young people. These are the voices of Boston's youth.

As you look around your communities, what do you feel is really needed that is not there now?

David: What's wrong with my suburban community is that they don't have any understanding of what goes on outside it. They only know what they read in the newspapers. Because of City Year, I'm working in these communities around Boston that are supposedly "bad neighborhoods." And you find out something entirely different when you meet the people who live there. They're not all the people you read about in the papers, committing all of these crimes and everything. And so, a community like mine just needs to be enlightened.

Khareem: I come from a totally opposite area, Roxbury, and as far as my community is concerned, it seems like money is the issue, organizations that are going to put teens somewhere other than on the street trying to get money for themselves by selling drugs or other things. We have very few organizations, especially around my area, that allow kids to go there and do something positive, or do something to get their energy out, besides fighting or something like that.

What program do you feel really reaches teens in your community?

Caroline: The programs that I feel are most effective are the ones that involve the youth themselves and make it fun for them to be there. You don't want to be part of a program where someone is talking at you and not with you. So, the most effective programs, I feel, are the ones that make the youth feel important - feel that they are involved and they can do something to change things.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTION!!!

We hope this newsletter is both informative and useful. Its success depends upon your input. We must join together to combat problems in our urban areas. We plan to highlight several programs from around the state in the next issue. Contributions to the newsletter can be forwarded to:

**Ms. Erin O'Sullivan
Attorney General's Office, 20th Floor
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108.**

First State-wide Mediation Conference Held

On November 19th, the Attorney General's office sponsored the first state-wide student mediator conference: "Student Mediators of Massachusetts: Teaching Peace". The conference was extremely successful; 260 students, 52 program coordinators from 47 regional schools participated. The conference was held at Northeastern University, Burlington Campus.

A variety of workshops and informational sessions were offered by 20 volunteer presenters. Students selected four main areas that they wanted more information about: sexual harassment, gangs, dating violence and diversity.

The Opening Session was the highlight of the conference. Scott Harshbarger addressed the audience with a panel of six peer mediators from various high schools. They responded to questions he asked them about the impact of mediation on their lives. Several spoke about how the mediation training helped them to realize that there are two sides to every dispute, and that solutions are possible. Scott then took a microphone and went down into the audience to take comments from other student mediators. "I think our program works," one young man offered "because its easier for kids to talk to each other than to adults."

In the coming months, program coordinators, mediators, and other interested parties will be invited to participate in brainstorming sessions to develop an on-going, state-wide organization in support of peer mediation in Massachusetts.

LECC MEETING

The Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee (LECC), co-chaired by the US Attorney and the Attorney General, brought together top law enforcement officials in Massachusetts, at a state-wide meeting on November 8-9, 1993, in Hyannis. The meeting was attended by several federal agency representatives from the FBI, DEA, and IRS, as well as state and local representatives from the Offices of the Attorney General, the State Police, District Attorney and many others.

Scott Harshbarger facilitated an interactive discussion on violence and youth on November 8th. On November 9th, Kathy Grant, Coordinator of the AG's Mediation Services, presented information on SCORE (Student Conflict Resolution Experts) during a workshop on violence prevention models. Jeannie Fawcett, Coordinator for the Durfee High School program in Fall River, joined Kathy along with two peer mediators. Scott facilitated the discussion on prevention strategies that followed.

Committee members were impressed by the positive experiences that students shared, and the level of commitment that the Attorney General has made toward the expansion of SCORE programs throughout the state.

SCORE programs, partially funded through the Attorney General's Office, are now in 20 schools in Massachusetts.

Civil Rights Liaison Joins Fight for Racial Harmony

Ratha Yem, the Southeast Asian Civil Rights Liaison for the Attorney General's office, has spent much of the last two years reaching out to youngsters in the cities of Revere, Chelsea, and Lynn.

He began his efforts in Revere where fights occurred between Cambodian and white youths. There, he was instrumental in establishing a street outreach program for youths.

In preparation for his work in Revere, he met with Molly Baldwin of Reaching Out to Chelsea Adolescents (ROCA) who had experience in street work with Latino youths in Chelsea. He explored the possibility of starting a Revere ROCA on Shirley Avenue in Revere.

Ratha and Molly met with Revere's Cambodian leaders and representatives from various local agencies to discuss a start-up program working with youths on Shirley Avenue. Unfortunately before the group was established a fight broke out involving over 100 Cambodian and white students at the Revere High School.

In the aftermath of the fight Ratha and Molly were asked to intervene. They separated the Cambodian and white students into separate homogenous groups. Ratha met with all the Cambodian students to find out which white students they perceived as trouble-makers, while Molly did the same thing with white students.

As a result of the fight at the school, a ROCA satellite office on Shirley Avenue was open

with funding from various foundations and agencies including a \$10,000 grant from the AG's office.

Approximately one month after the Revere High School incident and the opening of the ROCA office on Shirley Avenue, a truce between Cambodian and white youths was negotiated through a series of mediations.

After the truce between the Cambodian and white youths, there were a series of gang related drive-by shootings and fighting between two Cambodian rival groups which ROCA successfully defused. ROCA proved to be successful in defining these incidents. ROCA now plays a major role in the neighborhood creating pro-active activities for young people of all races utilizing staff who speak English, Khmer and Spanish.

While the Revere ROCA project deals specifically with issues surrounding youths, a Southeast Asian Advisory Committee (SAAC) has been formed as part of a five-point agreement between the AG's office and the City of Revere to discuss the broader issue of racial harmony, identifying ways to prevent violence and resolve a crisis in the Shirley Avenue neighborhood.

Southeast Asian Advisory Committee members consist of representatives from the Cambodian community, staff from the Metropolitan Indochinese Children and Adolescent Services (MICAS), the Mayor of Revere, the Revere Police Dept., the Revere School Dept., the Revere Housing Authority, and the ROCA Staff. SACC meets on the first Thursday of each month.

CONFERENCE CALENDAR

JANUARY 13, 1994

KEEPING NURSING HOME RESIDENTS SAFE

Thursday, January 13th
Springfield College, Springfield
Reservations: Michael Kogut (617) 727-2200
Admission: TBA
Audience: TBA

MARCH 3, 1994

SCHOOL SAFETY CONFERENCE

Thursday, March 3rd
JFK Library
Reservations: Sheila Martin (617) 727-2200
Admission: TBA
Audience: Superintendents, Police Departments

APRIL 7, 1994

PUBLIC CHARITIES CONFERENCE

Thursday, April 7th
Location: TBA
Reservations: Sheila Martin (617) 727-2200
Admission: TBA
Audience: Non-Profit Boards, Public Welcome

MAY 5, 1994

ELDER CONSUMER CONFERENCE

Thursday, May 5th
Location: TBA
Reservations: Sheila Martin (617) 727-2200
Admission: TBA
Audience: Elders, Public Welcome

JUNE 9, 1994

VIOLENCE IN OUR SOCIETY

Thursday, June 9th
Location: TBA
Reservations: Sheila Martin (617) 727-2200
Admission: TBA
Audience: Mayors, Police Chiefs, Superintendents, Community Leaders, DA's, Public Welcome

AGENDA: URBAN ISSUES

We hope you enjoyed the latest issue of Attorney General Scott Harshbarger's URBAN NEWSLETTER. If you know someone we have overlooked on our mailing list, please add the name at the bottom of this form. In the event that you have moved, please fill in the updated information and mail this form back to Ms. Erin O'Sullivan, Publications Coordinator, One Ashburton Place, 20th Floor, Boston, MA 02108.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please feel free to include them on this form, and return it to the Attorney General's office. Thank you for your cooperation and suggestions.

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AGENDA: URBAN ISSUES

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
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AG Joins Harvard School of Public Health to Advance Violence Prevention Cause

On April 9th, the Attorney General joined the Harvard School of Public Health for a seminar entitled "Toward a Healthier World Our Violent Society: The Public Health Agenda." Harshbarger addressed the role of law enforcement in fighting violence and pointed out the importance of preventive measures. Finally he issued a challenge to the medical and public health community to join with law enforcement in combatting violence. The following are excerpts from the Attorney General's remarks.

Violence is a problem of great concern to all of us. Despite our best efforts it seems to be escalating in frequency and severity. Yet it is not just street violence that is eating away at our society. From infants to elders and everyone in between; in marriage and dating relationships; between men and women, and in same sex relationships; between people of every color, of every culture, religion, and economic class; we, as a society, are beating, maiming, and killing each other at an unprecedented rate. Most disturbing of all is that much of it is within the confines of our most intimate relationships and the safety and security of our homes.

We continue to focus our resources at the end of the line - on the police, prosecutors and prisons - instead of the front end - on violence prevention programs, the schools, communities, the child welfare system, and the social services, and especially families.

For too long we have labeled violence a law enforcement problem or a social service problem.

Domestic violence and child abuse were once treated as "family problems" and that the police should not get involved. We now know that the police and the courts have an essential role to play in protecting victims of abuse and in punishing and changing the behavior of the abusers.

What can we learn from the past experiences of law enforcement in preventing violence? In many areas law enforcement has a clear role; to identify, arrest, prosecute and sanction offenders. That is a role that police and prosecutors have played well.

But, if we continue to treat violence as a problem solely for law enforcement to solve, then we will not only fail to prevent the escalating incidence of violence, but we will also fail to protect the victims of violence.

(continued on page 6)

To the Citizens of the Commonwealth:

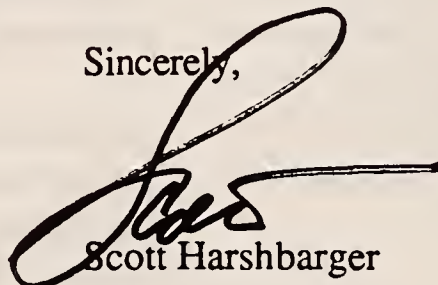
Violence is presently the number one issue on America's mind replacing the once long standing concerns about the economy. The degree of violence has escalated in our neighborhoods, schools, streets, and homes. We are relying upon our law enforcement personnel to put an end to violence on our streets, but law enforcement cannot be asked to do the job alone any longer. We must call upon school departments, students, parents, and community leaders to all help in the fight against violence. The fight against violence is what is addressed in this issue of AGenda: Urban Issues.

Many anti-violence programs that deserve praise have been initiated around the state. The Student Conflict Resolution Expert (SCORE) program continues to expand and educate students about alternatives to violence. Prosecution efforts have increased, with the expanded use of the civil rights statutes against domestic violence and gang members. The Suffolk County DA's Gang Unit has successfully convicted a number of juvenile offenders and serves as a model for the state. All of these efforts are encouraging. We must realize however, that we are only at the beginning of our violence prevention and education efforts.

We must continue to increase our knowledge and use of violence prevention techniques to enable us to win the fight for our neighborhoods. One of the best ways to learn about violence is to listen to those who deal with it daily. Some of the most sobering details come from our youth. Today, many teenagers must confront not only the death of loved grandparents but also the tragic loss of friends, classmates, and neighbors due to violence on the streets. This issues' "Students Speak Out" column contains some powerful poems written by students about violence. After reading these poems, it is hard not to be moved to action.

We must join together in our efforts to end violence in our society. This issue shows some examples of successful programs that have been established. As always, we hope this issue of AGenda: Urban Issues is informative and helpful. We welcome your comments and suggestions and urge you to contribute to the newsletter.

Sincerely,



Scott Harshbarger

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GANG UNIT INITIATIVE

The Attorney General's office continues its effort in the fight against violence on our streets by supporting the Gang Unit Initiative in the Suffolk County District Attorney's office. This Unit emphasizes combatting urban violence and supporting community efforts to increase the safety and quality of lives in our urban communities.

The Unit's goal is to conduct priority prosecution of youthful offenders, ages 17 to 23, charged with violent crimes arising out of gang related activity. A particular emphasis is placed on crimes involving the distribution of drugs and/or the use of firearms. The Gang Unit works with the Boston Police Department Anti-Gang Violence Unit as well as uniformed officers and detectives assigned to Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan police districts. Our AAG's assigned to the Unit have secured the incarceration of a significant number of major violators, making a significant contribution to the reduction of gang related violence in the City of Boston.

The following are case statistics from fiscal year 1993 for the Gang Unit Initiative:

GANG UNIT INITIATIVE CASE STATISTICS FY '93

Number of Defendants	97
Number of Charges	150
Number of Defendants Convicted	73
Number of Defendants Incarcerated	64
Number of Other Dispositions	27
Number of Pending Cases	21

CIVIL RIGHTS ACT USED TO PREVENT GANG VIOLENCE

In 1979 the legislature provided the Attorney General with a tool against those who violate the rights of others. The Civil Rights Act (CRA), contained in G.L. c. 12, section 11H enables the Attorney General to obtain injunctions against "any person or persons (who) interfere by threats, intimidation or coercion, or attempt to interfere by threats, intimidation or coercion, with the exercise or enjoyment by another person or persons of rights secured by the constitution or laws of the Commonwealth."

CRA is not limited in its application to cases involving issues of race, color, creed, religion, age, sexual preference, or gender. Its purpose is to provide a broad state remedy for deprivation of civil rights. The Supreme Judicial Court has held that its terms will be construed liberally. If anyone's rights are violated through threats, intimidation or coercion, the CRA may be used to provide a remedy.

The Act was originally designed to promote and protect equal access to many Boston neighborhoods, schools, transportation facilities, and other public places. Today, gang members, who represent only a small percentage of the residents in a given area, can very well hold an entire community of hard-working law-abiding people hostage. The CRA is an important additional tool that can be used to help reclaim our neighborhoods. Residents may have remedies under the CRA if:

- they have been told by gang members that they may only use a neighborhood park during certain hours;
- that they cannot go into a particular neighborhood area unless they plan to buy drugs;

(continued on page 5)

Corner

Legislation

The Attorney General's office is currently seeking to combat urban violence through new legislation. The following acts have been filed by the Attorney General's office and are awaiting response from the legislature.

LAW ENFORCEMENT TOOLS

Statewide Grand Jury, S. 790:

This bill would facilitate the prosecution of statewide criminal cases by allowing the Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court, upon written application of the Attorney General and a showing of good cause, to direct superior court judges to convene and preside over statewide grand juries with jurisdiction extending throughout the Commonwealth. Offenses indicted by statewide grand jury may be prosecuted in any county where the offenses occurred. Statewide grand juries will operate in the same manner as county grand juries, except as otherwise provided in the act.

Grand Jury Immunity, H. 2414:

This bill extends the obligation to a witness who has been granted immunity by a justice of the Supreme Judicial Court to testify or produce evidence not only before a grand jury, but also before any criminal proceeding in the superior court. It also modifies the General Laws by broadening the crimes for which witnesses may be granted immunity, with the addition of any felony to the list of crimes. The bill also extends the granting of immunity to a witness in criminal proceedings on the basis of not only immunity previously granted for grand jury testimony, but also for testimony in a superior court criminal proceeding.

Obstruction of Justice, S. 168:

This bill would codify the District Attorney's and Attorney General's ability to prosecute individuals who conceal or give false information, with the intent to influence the investigation, during an investigation of a crime or during a police officer's official functions.

GUNS

Increasing the Penalty for the Illegal Sale of a Firearm, Rifle, Shotgun, or Machine Gun, H. 2409:

Punishes the sale of a firearm, rifle, or machine gun by a licensed dealer to an unauthorized person by a five year felony.

Illegal Sale of Firearm, Rifle, Shotgun or Machine Gun to Juvenile, H. 2412:

Whoever knowingly sells, rents, leases or gives a firearm, rifle, shotgun or machine gun to a person who is less than seventeen years of age shall be punished by a term of imprisonment in the state prison or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than two years.

Corner *continued*

Felons in Possession of a Firearm, Rifle, or Shotgun, H. 3353:

The act would subject anyone who has been convicted of three prior felonies involving the distribution of drugs and/or the commission of crimes of violence and who is apprehended carrying a firearm, rifle, shotgun or machine gun without a proper license to a maximum penalty of ten years.

The Use of a Firearm, Rifle, Shotgun or Machine Gun in the Commission of a Felony, H. 2411:

This act creates a new offense punishable by a mandatory sentence of five years to be served from and after the sentence imposed upon the conviction for the underlying felony if a firearm was used in the felony.

Firearm Identification Cards and Licenses to Carry or Possess Firearms in Domestic Violence Cases, H. 2367:

The bill would strengthen the existing Firearm Identification Card (FID) and License to Carry Firearms (LCF) statutes to prohibit the issuance of an FID card or a firearms license to any person against whom there is an outstanding domestic violence restraining order. This bill would also permit the revocation of an FID card or firearms license if a domestic violence restraining order is issued against the card holder or licensee. In addition, this bill provides for criminal penalties for making false statements on the application for an FID card which parallel those of the license to carry statute. Finally, the bill would require that FID cards be renewed every 5 years and would establish an expiration schedule for all existing FID cards issued prior to the effective date of this act.

Civil Rights Act *continued...*

- they are physically intimidated over time from using a street, sidewalk, building entrance, or stairwell;
- they are told that they and their family members are not wanted in the community.

The Massachusetts Civil Rights Act can and should be used as an effective tool against individuals engaged in an ongoing pattern of gang terrorism. The Attorney General intends to use the CRA to supplement and enhance the more traditional criminal law that may be available in gang terrorism cases.

The CRA may be used without criminal prosecution, or in conjunction with criminal prosecution, as may be appropriate. It is the AG's view, however, that joint criminal/civil prosecution should be used whenever the facts permit.

To reprint information from the Attorney General's Urban Issues newsletter, please contact the Editor, Ms. Erin O'Sullivan at (617)727-2200 x2674.

Harvard School of Public Health *continued...*

The challenge we face is to work together not just to protect victims after the violence has occurred, but to prevent the violence in the first place.

The medical and social service community is in a key position to both identify trouble and to help form a multi-disciplinary team to intervene to prevent the recurrence of violence. You see the victims and the perpetrators first and most often. You can work with us in law enforcement to decide which kids need intervention to help them avoid serious trouble and which ones, unfortunately, are beyond help and need prosecution.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTION

We hope this newsletter is both informative and useful. Its success depends upon your input. We must join together to combat violence in our urban communities. The next issue of the urban newsletter will be published in September, 1994. Contributions to the newsletter are accepted through the first week of August. Contributions can be forwarded to:

Ms. Erin O'Sullivan
Publications Coordinator
Attorney General's Office
One Ashburton Place
20th Floor
Boston, MA 02108.

SCORE EXPANSION UPDATE...

The AG's office is presently overseeing a total of twenty Student Conflict Resolution Expert (SCORE) programs across the state. In these programs, a total of 1,568 cases have been mediated to date, with a settlement rate of 98%. This year, six new programs were started in English High School and the Grover Cleveland Middle School in Boston, Malden High School, Taunton High School, Dartmouth High School, and Haverhill High School. In Haverhill High School, a report showed a 58% decline in the number of fights and physical assaults from last year's numbers and a 40% decline in the number of suspensions. Each of the new programs have hired staff, and student mediators were trained during the fall and early winter. In the six new SCORE programs, a total of 161 peer mediations have taken place so far with a 95% settlement rate.

"Students Speak Out"

Violence enters all of our thoughts whether we are young or old. As the older generation focuses their energy on prevention of violent crimes, the younger generation feels powerless in the fight against crime. Kids feel defenseless on our streets, paralyzed by the life they see around them. The following poems written by kids from the United Youth of Boston Winter and Spring newspapers show us exactly how *Students Speak Out* about violence.

Stop the Violence (Revenge) part two

by Eric M.

*I heard someone died the other day.
Some kid down the street from around the way.
He messed around and he caught a bad one.
I wonder how I would feel if that was my son.
I can't stand to see someone lying on the ground.
I said this before, "You're putting your own race down."
The gangs get deeper and deeper every day.
They sell enough drugs, so they can get that quick pay.
They carry their straps to prove a point.
After their missions, they smoke a joint.
The graves get packed with our own kind.
'Cause someone didn't use the power in their mind.
Hurting someone's family member and making them sad.
Making Jesus Christ upset and very mad.
He brought us on this earth to make love and peace.
To love one another, not to put each other to a cease.
The violence in this world must come to an end.
The problems people can't even comprehend.
You must love your roots with lots of trust.
Coming together in unity is a must.
'Cause I'm trying to get all the community's attention.
To understand the strong statements that I mention.
Mothers and relatives are standing in a mute silence.
Have faith in each other and think
to STOP THE VIOLENCE.*

The Power

by: Kym Freeman

*Innocent and intended victims are silenced
by the barrel of a gun.
Violence plagues the inner city youth like a
menacing darkness overshadowing the light
of happiness.
Potentially brilliant minds filled with lies and
deceit.
Young brothers and sisters believe in the
power of the gun.
Force makes right.
Society teaches strength overcomes
weakness, brute force.
The weak are beaten down even killed.
But if one person takes the time to care,
the despair can end.
Using your gifts to help another in trouble,
Then individuals realize it can start with one
positive influence.
The power of the gun will lose its grip on
youth.
The domino effect influences youth to settle
differences positively and not negatively.
One individual can change the direction,
Self-hate to self-love called pride.
Hear the voice of the lost, reach out to them.
Be there.
Use your gifts to plant new seeds of hope.
That stir the soul to action.
Confidence empowers the youth to reach
beyond their limits.
A new path lays ahead, but the power lies in
you.
No one else can do it except you.
If life does not turn out
The way you want it to,
Then look in the mirror, the person
responsible for your happiness is you.*

If you would like to submit an article for the next "Students Speak Out" column the deadline is 8/15/94.

SCHOOL VIOLENCE CONFERENCE HELD BY AG

Over 400 law enforcement officials and educators attended *"Violence in Our Schools: A Coordinated Approach to Prevention,"* Attorney General Harshbarger's second annual statewide school safety conference on Tuesday, April 5th, at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston.

Police chiefs, school superintendents and principals, district court attorneys, sheriffs, probation officers, guidance counselors, teachers and nurses from 161 cities and towns throughout the Commonwealth attended.

Topics addressed at the conference included the recently enacted programs dealing with gang violence, and school based efforts to prevent dating violence and sexual harassment.

The conference opened with an overview of recently enacted laws that allow school principals to expel students for certain offenses presented by Rhoda Schneider, General Counsel of the Department of Education. In addition, the issue of search and seizure in school settings was also addressed.

District Attorney Tom Reilly then provided the audience with a description of the Community Based Justice Task Force he has

recently implemented in Middlesex County. Task Forces, which are currently implemented in Middlesex County. Task Forces, which are currently operating in Cambridge, Somerville, Lowell, and Malden, are designed to improve communication between police and school personnel in an effort to prevent incidents of serious violence in schools or effecting the school community.

A workshop on Gang Violence followed, and included presentations by school administrators and law enforcement officials. The panelists stressed that not all groups of students are gangs, but that any instances of group violence by students must be taken seriously. The workshop highlighted the use of civil rights statutes against gang members, and included a discussion by a student mediator of the effectiveness of medication in defusing group incidents.

The final session focused on preventing teen dating violence and sexual harassment. Carol Sousa, Coordinator of the Dating Violence Intervention Project, presented a model curriculum for teaching adolescents violence prevention techniques.

Schools were urged to recognize the seriousness of sexual harassment and dating violence. In doing so they were asked to develop educational programs for young men and women.

Other panelists discussed cooperation between schools and law enforcement officials and the problems associated with restraining orders in school settings.

The conference demonstrated that prevention is the best form of protection for kids in school, along with targeted prosecution of hardcore juvenile offenders.

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CONFERENCE CALENDAR

INSURANCE FRAUD/A VIEW FROM THE COURTS

Co-Sponsored by the Attorney General's Office and the Insurance Fraud Bureau

DATE: June 1, 1994
TIME: 8:00am - 4:00pm
PLACE: World Trade Center
Boston, Massachusetts
FEE: \$12.00

CONTACT: Deborah Terry Insurance Fraud Bureau
(617) 439-0439

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS:

PROTECTION FOR OLDER CONSUMERS

Featured Guests: WHDH's "THE MONEY EXPERTS"
Bob Glovsky & Rick Shaffer

DATE: June 28, 1994
TIME: 9:00am - 1:00pm
PLACE: Northeastern University
Blackman Auditorium
360 Huntington Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts
FEE: FREE ADMISSION
(Includes: Written Materials, Coffee, Tea & Pastry)

CONTACT: Sheila Martin (617) 727-2200 x 2033

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URBAN NEWSLETTER SIGN-UP SHEET

We hope you enjoyed the latest issue of Attorney General Scott Harshbarger's URBAN NEWSLETTER. Due to budget cuts however, we are forced to review our current newsletter list. If you wish to remain on the list please fill out the sheet below and send it to Ms. Erin O'Sullivan, Publications Coordinator, One Ashburton Place, 20th Floor, Boston, MA 02108 or fax it to (617) 727-6016.

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